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A DIPROSOPIC MONSTROSITY,—A RARE CASE OF TERATISM.

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presented by the author

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Of the forms of composite monstrosities, those exhibiting diprosopia, or duplication of the face, must be regarded as among the rarest varieties encountered, at least in the human race. Thus, according to Hirst and Piersol, in 500 fetal monsters of every description observed by Förster, there were noted only twenty-nine that were diprosopic, or 5.79 per cent.,—a very small proportion of a fetal condition that is rare at the best. These diprosopi have been described as showing varying degrees of facial duplication from the simplest form in which there is merely a doubling of the lower portion of the face, characterized by the presence of two mouths communicating with one oral cavity, and the usual number of eyes, *diprosopus diophthalmus*, up to an extreme differentiation of the features with a degree of separation of the heads approaching the condition known as dicephalus. The accompanying photograph, which was taken by a Chinese photographer, of Siam, and presented to the writer through the courtesy of his brother-in-law, Dr. James B. Thompson, of Petchaburee, Siam, represents that variety of the diprosopi known technically as *diprosopus tetrophthalmus*, in which there are present four eyes, although the individual still has but two ears.

The teratism in this instance was a female, born in the village of Ban Laam, a few months ago, of Siamese parentage. It had four eyes, two mouths, and an unusual width of the head. No mention is made of any other congenital defect,—to which this form of monstrosity is especially liable,—although it is probable that such existed internally. The child survived for fifteen days, eventually dying of inanition, which was induced by an inability to retain the nourishment taken, since the milk introduced through one mouth was immediately regurgitated through the other mouth, thus proving the existence of a common esophagus opening into the two oral cavities.

The points of especial interest in this case, in addition to the variety of malformation itself, are the sex of the child and the length of time that it survived. Of five cases examined by Fisher three were females and two males, and of the twenty-nine cases reported by Förster, sixteen were females and six males, in seven cases the sex not being stated. This indicates in thirty-five reported cases a percentage of 57½ of female children, or about two-thirds of the reported cases. Owing to the presence of other grave congenital defects, notably of the gastro-intestinal canal, the majority of the diprosopi are not viable. The child in the present instance lived for fifteen days, and Hirst and Piersol state that cases have been reported in which the child lived fifteen minutes, several weeks, and in one case seven months, with a good prospect of continued existence (Regnault, quoted by Fisher).